

12/31

0/27/1923

12/24

9.00 am

(72)

~~SECRET~~

DECLASSIFIED

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Russian): I now call upon the Minister of Foreign Affairs of DEPARTMENT OF STATE, whom I welcome to the Council's table.

Mr. LAMON (Ireland): Like all members of the Council I am sure, Ireland has watched with growing concern and apprehension developments in relations between the United States and Cuba over the past few years.

It was inevitable, perhaps, that the policies pursued by the Revolutionary Government which took office in Cuba at the end of 1958 should have led to a marked deterioration in the relations between the two countries. The leaders of the Cuban Revolution chose to regard the part played by United States interests in Cuba as the source of all their country's ills and a brake upon its economic and social development. In keeping with this view, they had recourse to confiscation and other measures directed against United States concerns, measures which inevitably aroused widespread ill-feeling and resentment in the United States.

Like other revolutions, moreover, Castroism, as it has come to be called, was inspired by a propagandist zeal which prompted it actively to pursue the spread of its ideas to other countries in Latin America. It is not necessary or relevant for my purpose to trace the course and the consequences of these activities. It is sufficient to note that they led to a serious deterioration in the relations between Cuba and other countries of Latin America and to such an increase of uneasiness and tension that today normal diplomatic relations exist between Cuba and only five other countries in Latin America.

The policies adopted by the Revolutionary Government in Havana with regard to United States interests in Cuba provoked, in their turn, measures of economic reprisal on the part of the United States. The United States had formerly taken 60 to 70 per cent of Cuba's total exports and had been the traditional supplier of 70 to 80 per cent of Cuba's imports. This long-standing pattern of trade was to a large extent disrupted, with serious consequences for Cuba's economy. The resulting curtailment in trade between the two countries was followed in due course by the establishment of closer economic and other relations between Cuba and the countries of Eastern Europe.

87 - 00 82 116

(Mr. Aiken, Ireland)

SECRET

The ~~growth of Soviet influence~~ Cuba and the countries of the Soviet bloc, although originally economic and commercial in character, gradually developed a political complexion which became more pronounced when the Government of Cuba announced its adherence to the doctrines of Marxism-Leninism. This was undoubtedly a new and disturbing development in the political relationships of the Western Hemisphere. As was made clear in the Declaration of San José of August 1960, the growth of Soviet intervention in Cuba was resented by all the other States in the area as "an attempt capable of destroying hemispheric unity and jeopardizing the peace and the security of the hemisphere". The fact is that Cuba's emergence as a Marxist-Leninist state had inevitably injected the "cold war" into the political relations of the American States among themselves, and they were dismayed by the danger to American solidarity and security which the new development was seen to portend.

The train of events which I have summarized might have been arrested and the difficulties it created might perhaps have been solved in a spirit of conciliation and mutual understanding, but for the recent decision of the Soviet Union to strengthen Cuba's military potential.

I understand the concern which the Revolutionary Government of Cuba feel for their national security. It is all the more understandable in view of the attempt made by Cuban refugee elements to invade their territory in April of last year. It is only natural that the Cubans should seek to strengthen their defences so as to be able to cope with any similar attack in the future. But it is a far cry from that to a military build-up of the kind which the Cuban Government now appears to have embarked upon with the massive assistance of the Soviet Union. This clearly amounts to much more than a mere strengthening of Cuba's defences against invasion. It involves the stationing on Cuban territory of the latest types of military weapons, manned by Soviet technicians and capable, by their power and range, of striking a deadly blow against all the principal cities and industrial centres of the American continent. It is difficult for us, as it must be for others, to understand the reasons which led the Soviet Government, given the present state of tension existing throughout the world,

(Mr. Wiken, Ireland)

001 05 30 15 0

to take a step which has the effect of upsetting the existing delicate balance of world security, the stability of which it is in the interest of all of us to maintain. For several years now no new foreign military bases have been established throughout the world. Many of us were beginning to hope that all the greater Powers, realizing the immense responsibilities which the possession of nuclear armaments imposes, were seeking ways of withdrawing from foreign bases wherever they could, thereby relieving the tension which the maintenance of such bases tends to prolong.

031 05 30 15 0

DECLASSIFIED

Mr. Aiken, Ireland

It is certainly a great disappointment to any such hope that, having regard to the vital interests of all small nations in reducing world tensions and promoting peace, any small nation, no matter from what motives or under what provocation, should willingly become a new strategic base for the prosecution of the cold war or a spearhead in a nuclear conflict.

As members of the Council are aware, my country was neutral during the Second World War. Our neutrality had as one of its fundamental bases a principle enunciated by the then leader of our Government, Mr. de Valera. That principle was that under no circumstances would we allow our country to be used as a base for attack against our neighbour, Great Britain. The principle is relevant to the case of all small countries threatened with involvement in conflicts or rivalries in which their powerful neighbours are engaged. It has special validity in the case of small countries placed beside powerful neighbours with whom they may have disputes or disagreements, as at the time of the Second World War we had -- and indeed still have -- with our neighbour, Great Britain, in regard to the partition of our country, but it is, we believe, a principle worthy of the consideration of the Government of Cuba.

One of the major points of disagreement which emerged from the statements submitted to the Council by the representatives of the United States and the Soviet Union relates to the character and purpose of the large-scale military equipment recently supplied to Cuba by the Soviet Union. The United States asserts that the missile bases recently established in Cuba are of an essentially offensive character in so far as they are capable of firing ballistic missiles carrying thermonuclear warheads to North and South America. The Soviet Union claims, on the other hand, that, as stated in the Soviet-Cuban communique of 3 September 1962, the arms and military equipment concerned are intended solely for defensive purposes. They assert that the Governments of both Cuba and the Soviet Union still firmly adhere to that position. Apparently the Soviet Union does not deny, however, that the missiles and aircraft concerned have the range and striking potential which the United States attributes to them.

There is some force in the argument often used that whether a weapon is to be regarded as offensive or defensive depends less on its intrinsic character

DECLASSIFIED

than on the intentions of those who possess it. Whatever may be the intentions of the Soviet or the Cuban Government, however, it appears undeniable that the installations, missiles and aircraft now in Cuba are capable, in the hands of ill-intentioned persons, of constituting a deadly threat to the security of North and South America. The enclosure to Mr. Morozov's letter of 23 October 1962 to the President of the Security Council states:

"Today, as never before, statesmen must show calm and prudence and must not countenance the rattling of weapons." (S/5186, page 3)

What we find it hard to understand -- and a fact of which we have heard no satisfactory explanation at this table -- is why it should have been regarded as wise and prudent, in the present state of world tension, to establish new military installations of this striking power in a small country in such close proximity to the American continent.

As I have said, I can understand Cuba's concern for its national security. But its national security already had the benefit of a formal assurance of military assistance from the Soviet Union if it were attacked. In a statement to The New York Times on 13 July 1960, Chairman Khrushchev said:

"Should the United States imperialists undertake aggressive action against the Cuban people upholding their national independence, we would support the Cuban people."

Moreover, on 11 September 1962, the Soviet Union, in an official statement, said -- and I quote the statement:

"There is no need for the Soviet Union to shift its weapons for the repulsion of aggression, for a retaliatory blow, to any other country, for instance Cuba The Soviet Union has so powerful rockets to carry these nuclear warheads that there is no need to search for sites for them beyond the boundaries of the Soviet Union."

The question inevitably arises, in view of these statements, why the Soviet Union should have chosen this moment to establish new missile and bomber bases on the island of Cuba? Why should Cuba, already assured of the powerful protection of the Soviet Union, have sought to reinforce it by obviously less powerful and more vulnerable bases in its own territory?

03115081030

8/17.1022

55-55

(Mr. Aiken, Ireland)

031105081030

It is quite true, in principle, as the representative of the Soviet Union has argued, that it is for Cuba in the exercise of its national sovereignty to decide how best to organize its own national defence. As he said: "Cuba belongs to the Cuban people and only they can be masters of their fate." But all Governments are bound to use the powers they derive from their national sovereignty not only in the best interests of their own peoples, but with due regard for the preservation of good relations with their neighbours and for the peace of the world. As the experience of this nuclear age has already shown, small countries, by allowing new military, and particularly nuclear, bases on their national territories may upset the world's strategic balance and add greatly to existing tensions.

This is a political fact which we cannot ignore. The Soviet Union may criticize the reactions of the United States in the case of Cuba, but it cannot fail to understand them. On more than one occasion in the past the Soviet Union has itself issued stern warnings to neighbouring countries of the possible consequences of the stationing of nuclear missiles on their territories.

031105081030

~~DECLASSIFIED~~ (Mr. Aiken, Ireland)

We have reached the stage, when the extension of nuclear bases and the spread of nuclear weapons have become unacceptable to reasonable men as methods of solving the problems of world security. If the principals in the present crisis proceed on their present course, a headlong collision is bound to occur which may well lead to world war and all that it means. The search for a peaceful solution was never more urgent or more necessary, or indeed more difficult. But, as Edmund Burke once said:

"If measures of peace are necessary, they must begin somewhere; and a conciliatory temper must precede and prepare every plan of reconciliation."

In the spirit of this phrase I have searched carefully in the statements submitted to the Council by the United States and the Soviet Union for some indication of a willingness on both sides to seek a peaceful solution of the problem now before us. In his statement to the Security Council on 22 October, the representative of the United States stated that his Government was willing to confer with the Soviet Union on measures to remove the existing threat to the security of the Western Hemisphere and the peace of the world. In the draft resolution (S/5167) which he submitted to the Council yesterday, the representative of the Soviet Union proposed that the Council should call upon the United States of America, the Republic of Cuba and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to establish contacts and to enter into negotiations with the purpose of normalizing the situation and of thus removing the threat of war. In both cases the contacts and negotiations were suggested as the final step in a wider scheme of proposals upon which agreement may take time to achieve. But let us make no mistake about it, the danger to peace with which we are faced will not brook delay. Moreover, it can only be dispelled by agreement, and agreement cannot be achieved without discussions and negotiations. Let us hope, therefore, that negotiations will be entered into while there is still time.

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Russian): In view of the fact that the lunch hour is approaching, there is a proposal -- I hope there will be no objection to it -- to postpone the interpretation of the speech of the Foreign Minister of Ireland until the meeting this evening, which is to be set for 6 o'clock, bearing in mind the fact that today is United Nations Day and that certain arrangements have accordingly been made. As I understand it, the Foreign Minister of Ireland has no objection to the postponement of the interpretation of his speech, and if other members of the Council likewise have no objection, we shall set the meeting for this evening at 6 o'clock.

I hear no objections. Accordingly, the meeting is adjourned. We shall resume the meeting at 6 p.m.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.

0311587030